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the bench to this day in the English language has survived, preserved in the feudal dignity of the early tribunal.

Within the recesses of the coffer-bench—in French “banc,” Italian “banco”—the money-changers kept their money. And this custom, as well as the part played by the arche bench in early financial life, is to this day embodied in the bank, French “banque,” Italian “banca”—hence the “banker,” who from the money-lender and money-changer who kept his treasure in his “arche-banc,” has become the ruling power of the world. (Havard. *Dict. de l'Ameublement et de la Decoration*. Articles, “Banc,” “Bahut,” “Coffre,” “Huche,” etc. See also Viollet-le-Duc. *Dict. du Mobilier Français*).

The oldest specimens of chests extant, dating of the thirteenth century, are rough boxes. The joiners' work is poor and the decoration is formed of admirably wrought iron panels of rich spiral design. The surface of the wood is dissimulated beneath a covering of skin or of painted linen now destroyed. Churches in England, France and Germany still preserve these relics of ecclesiastical furniture. In the fourteenth century, in those countries carving replaced this iron plating. Carved figures of warriors and panelings are seen, of which ornate Gothic windows furnish the design. In time, with increased elaboration, armorial bearings appear. Very different are the Italian cassoni of the period in which are used gilt and gesso or other plaster combinations, and to adorn which the best painters are employed, although Italy produced also carved wooden chests.

The close relations between Italy and France under Charles VIII introduced the style of the Italian Renaissance artists into western Europe, notably on the Loire, where Charles established skilled Italian artists. Also at Château Gaillon several skilled artists went to work carving delicate traceries of arabesques that seemed copied from the marble tombs of Tuscany and Lombardy. The chests of that epoch in Normandy and Touraine are marvels of taste with their delicate efflorescences.

In France, the heyday of the chest expired about the end of the sixteenth century with the development of furniture; but it survived in the provinces; and in England its reign was prolonged.

S. Y. S.



THE COMING TAPESTRY EXHIBITION

Tapestries are a fascinating form of art. Their large scale makes them easy to appreciate even from a little distance, and their story interest attracts many who care not at all for abstract pictures. Especially do they appeal, on account of their extraordinarily beautiful texture, to lovers of Oriental rugs. So that the exhibition of tapestries to be held in the Pennsylvania Museum for two weeks beginning Monday, October 25th, will be an important feature of the artistic life of Philadelphia this autumn. There will be shown more than forty immense picture cloths, some owned in Philadelphia, the rest

borrowed for the occasion from New York. All periods and all countries will be represented—Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo and Classic, Flemish, French, Italian and Spanish, as well as ancient Coptic and Peruvian, and modern Chinese, Japanese, and American.

A Gothic tapestry to be exhibited, subject, "Bathsheba at the Bath," is ten feet eight inches high, by thirteen feet six inches wide, and compares favorably with the best in the famous Royal Spanish collection, acquired by the kings of Spain when Brussels, where the tapestry was woven, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, was under Spanish dominion. Indeed, of one piece in the Royal Spanish collection, this tapestry is an almost exact duplicate, the principal difference being that the Spanish one has a Latin caption in the top border, telling the story. The caption reads as follows:

Bersabee. corpus. lavit.

Quam. ex. adverso. vidit. David.

Pro. illa. suos. destinavit.

which means that David no sooner saw Bathsheba, than he was struck by her beauty and sent for her.

This tapestry is an example of the extreme modesty with which Gothic tapestries treat episodes that from Renaissance or later looms would emerge immodest. We all know how Giulio Romano or François Boucher would have pictured "Bathsheba at the Bath." But here we see her daintily laving her fingers without a suggestion of nudity above the wrist, and not at all décolleté, as compared with the evening costumes of ladies of today.

The decorative details of the tapestry are unusually important, especially the Gothic architecture of the fountain, and of the pavilion in the upper right corner of the tapestry, at the entrance of which stands King David, sceptre in hand, looking admiringly at Bathsheba. The fine linen towel carried by Bathsheba's maid has a macramé fringe and apparently a lace border. The costumes are exquisitely rich, and the border of the tapestry is a most delightful composition of leaves and fruit. In the general plan of the tapestry the influence of the Renaissance begins to appear in the opening up of the landscape to the rear, but in weave and texture the tapestry is wholly and delightfully Gothic, and one of the most perfect accomplishments of the Golden Age of Tapestry.

This is a prize that would make any museum a tapestry museum, and attract the attention of lovers of art to any city. There is also a "Bathsheba at the Bath" in the Brussels Museum, which came from the Somzée collection in 1901, woven from the same design, but greatly and gracefully extended on the right and on the left. In the Cluny Museum there is a set of ten David tapestries, one of which pictures Bathsheba at the Bath, all much higher and larger than that described above, and enriched with gold.

Another tapestry to be shown, the Renaissance "Prophets and Kings," eleven feet eight by fifteen feet two, also pictures a Bible story. What this story is, the Latin caption in the top border makes clear. It is verse 10 of chapter 22 of I Kings, and in the English version reads: "And Ahab the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, sat each on his throne, having put on their robes; and all the prophets prophesied before them." The two

crowned and sceptred kings are seated on the right of the tapestry, the identity of Ahab being marked by the letters ACHAP that appear on his right sleeve, while the letters IOSAPHAT appear on the border of Jehoshaphat's mantle, draping his left knee. The prophet in the foreground, whose left hand grasps a huge trident, is Zedekiah with the letters GEDKIA upon his hat, while just behind him stands Micaiah, with MIICH on the bottom border of his robe. In the center of the scene, between prophets and kings, but a little in the background, with her name upon her gown, stands Ahab's beautiful wife, whose wickedness has made Jezebel a word to shudder at.

Zedekiah and the rest of the four hundred prophets prophesied as Ahab wished. Micaiah opposed him and was sent to prison. But Micaiah's prophecy came true, and Ahab was killed in battle against the king of Syria. The city that backgrounds the scene is Samaria.

This tapestry is one of a set of four from the famous Somzée collection that was sold in Brussels in 1901. It was woven in Brussels in the third quarter of the sixteenth century, and has the Brussels mark, two B's on each side of a shield, woven into the bottom selvage. The weaver's monogram, that has suffered at the hands of time and of the repairer, was originally formed of the letters CR.

These and the other tapestries to be shown at the coming exhibition, will be fully described, and many of them illustrated, in a special handbook and catalogue prepared for the purpose by Mr. George Leland Hunter, author of the standard work, "Tapestries, their Origin, History and Renaissance," who is organizing and arranging the exhibition for the Museum.

The catalogue will be on sale at the Museum on and after October 25th, or may be obtained by applying to the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Museum, Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia. Price 25 cents.

During the course of the exhibition, Mr. Hunter will give free lecture promenades on tapestries, developing in a way easy to understand, their texture interest as well as their picture and story interest, to art and architectural societies and others. These lecture promenades will be by appointment only, and appointments can be made before October 25th by mail or telephone to the Director of the Pennsylvania Museum, Memorial Hall, Fairmount Park, Philadelphia.



RECENT ACCESSIONS

Among the recent purchases for the Museum are two Chinese glazed ridge tiles, or finials, of the Ming Dynasty, measuring twelve and a half and thirteen and a half inches respectively. These make an interesting addition to the Museum's collection of tiles, which is quite extensive and varied.

A Spanish water jar, or fountain, of the eighteenth century is an unusual example of old Granada maiolica, decorated with bold floral and bird designs